

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 240

(Chair, Economic Matters Committee)(By Request -
Departmental - Planning)

Economic Matters

**Local Comprehensive Plans - Guidance Materials and Notification to the
Department of Planning**

This departmental bill requires each planning commission statewide to notify the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) when *beginning* a review of its local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan at least once every 10 years. The bill requires MDP to (1) provide the planning commission – within 60 days after receiving notification – with guidance materials relating to State laws, best practices for local comprehensive plans, and any other resources that may support the review, revision, or amendment of the comprehensive plan and (2) develop and maintain the guidance materials in consultation with other State agencies and offices as MDP considers appropriate.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDP can implement the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: MDP has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law:

Comprehensive Plans – Generally

Local jurisdictions statewide are required to enact, adopt, amend, and execute a comprehensive plan (to guide the implementation of land use controls and zoning) that

includes specified planning principles and elements. At least once every 10 years, each local jurisdiction must review its comprehensive plan and, if necessary, revise or amend the plan.

Comprehensive Plan Review Process

Commission County or Municipality

Under Division I of the Land Use Article, a planning commission of a commission county, or a municipality that exercises planning and zoning authority, before adopting a comprehensive plan, must:

- hold at least one public hearing before the commission or municipality recommends the adoption of a plan or any part or amendment to a plan;
- publish at least one notice of the time and place of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the local jurisdiction;
- at least 60 days before the public hearing, provide copies of the recommended plan and amendments to the plan to (1) adjoining jurisdictions and (2) State units, regional units, and local jurisdictions responsible for financing or constructing public improvements necessary to implement the plan; and
- include in its report to the legislative body (related to proposed districts, zones, and regulations) the recommendation of each unit and jurisdiction that comments on the plan.

Charter County or Code County

Charter counties (including Baltimore City), and code counties that choose to exercise the powers related to land use in the Express Powers Act, are not required to submit a draft of their comprehensive plan and amendments to MDP or other State agencies for review, comments, and recommendations prior to adoption of the comprehensive plan.

Maryland Department of Planning – Local Assistance and Central Depository

MDP functions in part as an advisory, consultative, and coordinating agency. MDP must (1) cooperate with and assist local governments in the execution of their planning functions, to harmonize their planning activities with the State Development Plan and (2) harmonize its planning activities with the planning activities of local governments.

MDP is the central depository for all land use plans and all amendments and revisions to land use plans adopted by a unit of State government, regional government, or local government, or an interstate agency. Each unit of government or agency must submit to

MDP a current version of all adopted land use plans and all adopted amendments and revisions to land use plans, which must be posted on MDP's website if submitted in an electronic format. The comprehensive plan for a county, or a municipality with planning and zoning authority, is posted on MDP's [website](#) along with other information and materials about comprehensive plans.

Background: MDP indicates that receiving notification from local planning commissions at the *beginning* of the comprehensive plan review process (1) allows MDP to provide resources and guidance materials throughout the comprehensive planning process; (2) provides the necessary time for planning commissions to incorporate comments and recommendations from MDP and other State agencies related to the plan's consistency with State law and best practices; (3) reduces the amount of technical assistance and guidance required by MDP for commission counties and municipalities during the 60-day review period before the public hearing (see Current Law); and (4) allows charter counties to receive from MDP, guidance materials developed and maintained in consultation with other State agencies and offices that, in the absence of the bill, the charter counties would not otherwise receive.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Charles, and Dorchester counties; Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; cities of Greenbelt and Laurel; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland Department of Planning; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2026
jg/sdk

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Local Comprehensive Plans - Guidance Materials and Notification to the Department of Planning

BILL NUMBER: HB 240

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PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

 X WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

 WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS